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RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 2872
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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [CWC](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC): OPCW
DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI DELEGATION

Classified By: Ambassador Eric M. Javits, Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

This is CWC-33-07.

11. (C) Summary: On April 18, Rogelio Pfirter, the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), hosted discussions with an Israeli delegation headed by Miriam Ziv, MFA Deputy Director General for Strategic Affairs. The Israeli delegation was largely in a listening mode and emphasized the desire to remain engaged with the OPCW. However, they left no doubt that Israel is not in a position to ratify the CWC, outlining the threats from other countries in the region, including WMD capabilities. End Summary.

12. (U) DG Pfirter and senior OPCW officials met with the Israeli delegation (listed at para 10 below) before initiating a larger discussion with a number of Ambassadors to the OPCW. After introductory remarks from Pfirter, Ziv expressed appreciation for the work of the OPCW and emphasized that Israel wants to be engaged with the organization. She noted that she was in The Hague for bilateral discussions and had covered export controls, nonproliferation, and regional issues. She then introduced the other members of the delegation, making a particularly detailed presentation on the work Mr. Shai Cohen, deputy director of the MFA export control department. Ziv noted that there is legislation in the Knesset which covers munitions, and that Cohen's department has doubled in size due to the new requirements in the legislation.

13. (C) Ziv emphasized that the Israeli position regarding the CWC is quite clear. It had signed in 1993, which was a very different time. She turned the floor over to Ms. Tamar Rahaminoff-Honig, deputy director of the MFA arms control department, who emphasized that there had been positive signals in 1993 and Israel had indicated its support for the CWC, viewing it as a confidence-building measure. However,

other states in the region subsequently made clear that even if Israel ratified, they would not ratify the Convention. The regional situation had obviously worsened since then and "some states in the region have CW." Israel, she continued, assess the possible contribution to its security by looking at two factors:

-- Intention: There is a unique set of threats from neighbors faced by Israel.

-- Capabilities: Some other states in the region have developed WMD arsenals. The question for Israel is if existing mechanisms can protect Israel against hostile intentions.

14. (U) The DG then called on the Ambassadors to discuss various specific issues, in addition to any points each Ambassador wished to make. He called on U.S. PermRep Javits to comment on the consensus-based approach in the OPCW. After Amb. Javits addressed that topic, he added that the intention of the meeting was not to second-guess Israel's own assessment of the security situation and the benefits of CWC accession. Instead, he hoped Israel would consider that the more strands that are added to safety nets, the more security would be available for Israel. What is critical is continuing the dialogue and clearly expressing the hope that Israel will join the Convention.

15. (U) Chinese Amb. Xue Hanqin seconded the point that the intention is not to persuade Israel, but to exchange views. She stressed that China attaches great importance to the CWC and believes it would be important for Israel to also join. This can indeed serve as a CBM. She then cited the example of the CWC serving as the framework for cooperation between

China and Japan on abandoned CW. Russian Deputy PermRep Konstantin Gavrilov discussed Russian efforts on destruction and noted the role played by international assistance. Gavrilov also emphasized that universality is important to Moscow, which supports dialogue to convince them to join the CWC.

16. (U) UK Amb. Lyn Parker reported on preparations for the Second RevCon in April 2008, stating that the OPCW has made great progress. He also noted that whether to ratify is Israel's sovereign decision, but commented that there are many public, transparent processes within the Convention and the operations of the OPCW. The UK echoed the statements by Amb. Javits on the clear, common purpose of the OPCW. He concluded by noting that destruction will be key until 2012, and that nonproliferation as well as chemical industry issues will become more prominent thereafter. Ziv asked if any changes had been made in Scheduled chemicals, and the DG replied that there had been no changes. Indian Amb. Neelam Sabharwal also reiterated the line that ratification is a sovereign Israeli decision, and then focused on the importance of a growing chemical industry in India, stressing that the CWC does not inhibit responsible growth.

17. (U) Ziv then asked about verification measures, and the DG noted that there is a provision for challenge inspections (CI). It has not been used yet, and there are concerns about the political aspects of having a CI. However, there is consensus on the need for the TS to develop the ability to conduct a CI. Amb. Javits noted that a CI is viewed as a sword of Damocles, which, in some respects, has generated movement on other issues. Measures short of a CI have also been used to address concerns. Ziv then asked if there is some similar measure regarding industry and identifying illegal activity. The DG reported on high level of established National Authorities, open-source information, and declarations.

18. (U) Brazilian Amb. Gilberto Saboia noted that Israeli accession would be a major step forward. He cited Article X assistance and the framework provided by the OPCW. The DG then added that OPCW support in countering terrorism has also received more attention. French Amb. Jean-Michel Gausso

commented that the OPCW should consider what more it can do to contribute in this area. He also supported the comments of strengthening a safety net. Gaussot noted the accession of Libya and projected accession of Iraq. He then commented that Israeli accession would weaken the arguments of critics of Israel in the region. And it would be beneficial to de-link CW from other regional security issues. The DG added that he had emphasized de-linkage in Cairo on April 17. China added that the TS itself serves as a CBM.

¶9. (C) Ziv replied that others have a different view of a CBM, taking it much more lightly than Israel. The politics of the region are not allowing Israel to move forward. Israel faces hostile neighbors who do not recognize its existence; are avowedly seeking their destruction; and with whom they cannot even have a dialogue. The sine qua non is for them to recognize Israel. And Israel was aware of reports that unconventional weapons have become conventional. Syria could assemble and mobilize BW for use in 12 hours, said Ziv, and this is obviously a critical matter for Israel. The Syrian weapons capability is being modernized, and Israel believes Iran has a CW stockpile. Ziv noted that other nations in other regions have an opportunity for discussion. Israel does not have that option, and Israel does not view CBMs as do other countries. However, Ziv concluded, Israel would continue to stay engaged with the OPCW and would certainly continue to want to learn more about its activities.

¶10. (U) Israeli Delegation:

Ms. Miriam Ziv - Deputy DG for Strategic Affairs, MFA

Mr. Benny Dagan - Deputy Director, Center for Policy Research, MFA

Ms. Tamar Rahaminoff-Honig - Deputy Director, Arms Control Department, MFA

Mr. Shai Cohen - Deputy Director, Export Control Department, MFA

Mr. Yair Even - Political Counselor, Israeli Embassy, The Hague

¶11. (U) Javits sends.

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